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Publicity Is Not Asset For Spies

By LOUIS CASSELS

WASHINGTON (UPI) — A knack for breaking into the headlines can be useful to movie starlets, professional athletes, politicians, authors and others whose careers flourish on publicity.

However, it is not generally regarded as an asset for spies.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has a flair for making the front pages that a veteran Broadway black would envy.

The supposedly super-secret spy organization has been wallowing in printer's ink for the past week, as a result of the disclosure that it has been surreptitiously subsidizing America's largest undergraduate organization, the National Student Association.

This is the latest in a long series of incidents that has made the CIA the best-known and most frequently embarrassed espionage outfit in history.

Without wishing to do so, the CIA has achieved such fame—or notoriety — throughout the world that it now can expect to receive the credit or blame for almost any unexplained event.

Let a politician die suddenly or a government fall in any remote country, and the word will soon be out that "The CIA did it." Thus, the CIA was widely claimed to have arranged the assassinations of pro-Communist Premier Patrice Lumumba in the Congo and dictator Rafael Trujillon in the Dominican Republic, when in fact it had nothing to do with either.

Its non-involvement in these cases, however, should not be taken to mean that it is loath to meddle in the internal affairs of other nations. In the "back alley war, of international intrigue, the CIA has arranged revolutions—for example, the one which overthrew the leftist Arbenz government of Guatemala in 1954.

It also had a hand in the upheaval that broke the Communist grip on Indonesia, and reduced President Sukarno to his present ineffectual status.

Although it often seems to operate about as discreetly as an elephant lumbering through a thicket, the CIA can on occasion live up to its self-[illegible]

By subverting a high official of Soviet intelligence, Col. Oleg Penkovsky [illegible]

The CIA also has had some unheralded successes in calling the shots on international developments.

It predicted almost the exact date of Red China's first nuclear explosion. It warned well in advance of the British-French-Israel invasion of Egypt during the Suez crisis. It warned—in vain—that Red China would enter the Korean War if U.S. forces pushed too close to the Manchurian border.

Sometimes the CIA is blamed for fugling when it deserves to be praised for a brilliant stroke of intelligence. A notable case was the international flap that took place in 1960 when CIA agent Francis Gary Powers was shot down while photographing the Soviet Union from a high altitude U2 plane.

The incident was blamed for wrecking the 1960 summit conference in Paris. But hindsight has made clear that the Russians were looking for an excuse to wreck the conference anyway.

From an intelligence viewpoint, the important fact is that the U2 flights were carried on for four years without mishap, and resulted in incredibly detailed aerial maps of Soviet missile sites and other installations.

It also was a CIA-piloted U2 that brought back the telltale photos of missile launching sites in Cuba, and enabled the United States to nip in the bud a grave threat to its security.

But to mention Cuba is to dredge up the unhappy memory of the CIA's most spectacular blunder—the Bay of Pigs invasion fiasco in 1961. The CIA also has a talent bordering on genius for garnering unfavorable publicity for relatively minor incidents.

Within the past year, for example, it has been embroiled in three embarrassing episodes, not counting the student association affair:

—An Estonian refugee lodged a $110,000 slander suit against a man who defended himself by explaining that he was a CIA agent and had disseminated the alleged slanders on CIA orders.

—A CIA expert on clandestine operations, Hans V. Tofte, was fired for carrying classified documents home from the office. Tofte said the charges resulted from a 'silly cloak and